

5-1997

Effects of the Media on Parents and Teachers in Regard to Reading Aloud to Children

Darwin Spiller
Langston University

Follow this and additional works at: http://dclu.langston.edu/mccabe_theses



Part of the [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Educational Psychology Commons](#), [Other Education Commons](#), and the [Television Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Spiller, Darwin, "Effects of the Media on Parents and Teachers in Regard to Reading Aloud to Children" (1997). *McCabe Thesis Collection*. Paper 41.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ Langston University. It has been accepted for inclusion in McCabe Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Langston University. For more information, please contact jblewis@langston.edu.

The Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program

Senior Thesis

“Effects of the Media on Parents and Teachers in Regard to Reading Aloud to Children”

Darwin Spiller

May 1997

Langston University
Langston, Oklahoma

**Effects of the Media on Parents and
Teachers in Regard to Reading
Aloud to Children**

By

Darwin Prater Spiller

Elementary Education Major

School of Education and Behavioral Sciences

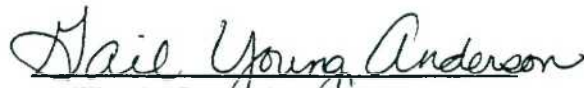
Langston University

Langston, Oklahoma

**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the
E. P. McCabe Honors Program
December 1996**

**Effects of the Media on Parents and
Teachers in Regard to Reading
Aloud to Children**

Thesis Approved:


Thesis Committee Chairman


Thesis Committee Member


Thesis Committee Member


Director of the Honors Program


Vice President for Academic Affairs

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the faculty of the E. P. McCabe Honors Program and the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences, whom I will always remember. Many thanks to Dr. Judith Flores, past committee chairman, and Mrs. Gail Anderson, present committee chairman, for all the support, advice, and encouragement during the course of my thesis project. In addition, I am most appreciative to my thesis committee members Njambi Kamoche, Acting Director of Libraries, and Dr. Yvonne Montgomery for giving me inestimable time and professional wisdom and guidance. Special recognition is given to Dr. Darlington Mundende for his expertise and guidance in interpretation of data.

I thank my family and friends for listening when I needed to be heard. A special thanks goes to my friend Jacqueline D. Camphor for providing me with that competitive edge. Last, but certainly not least, I thank God, who is number one in my life, for providing me with the necessary skills for getting me to the point I am today as well as the strength and determination to complete this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	2
Hypothesis.....	3
Limitations.....	3
Organization of the Study.....	3
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	4
III. METHODOLOGY.....	21
Subjects.....	21
Questionnaire Design.....	21
Procedure.....	22
Data Analysis.....	22
IV. PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS.....	23
Media Effects on Parents.....	23
Media Effects on Teachers.....	26
V. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations.....	28
APPENDICES.....	32
Appendix A. Parent Questionnaire	
Appendix B. Teacher Questionnaire	
Appendix C. Letter to Principal	
Appendix D. Letter to Parent (s)	
Appendix E. Letter to Teacher	
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	45

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The media have brought information about the benefits of reading to children into homes and schools, yet many parents do not take this advice seriously. In the schools, few teachers take fifteen minutes per day to read aloud to their classes (Trelease, 1989).

As long as research demonstrates that reading aloud is critical in creating a nation of readers, it is incumbent upon educators to ensure success by convincing their business partners--parents of its importance: "This [parents reading to children] can be accomplished in two ways: (a) by selling its importance to tomorrow's parents who are sitting in today's classrooms; (b) by showing today's parents how simple and important reading aloud can be in promoting their children's literacy abilities" (Trelease, 204).

Classroom teachers must also be convinced of the importance of reading aloud to students. While the practice of reading aloud daily is on the rise, it is far from universal among elementary and high school teachers (Criscuolo, 1986).

The media have played an important role in promoting reading aloud by parents to children. Parents are aware of the importance of reading aloud and seem to realize that they should be investing significant time each day in this act (The Classroom Reading Teacher, 1988).

With all of this reported data, it still is not known if television commercials, magazine articles and posters reading aloud to children have had any appreciable effect on the time spent in oral reading by parents and by teachers in the classroom.

Research can help determine whether or not parents and teachers invest significant quality time in reading aloud to children so that a lifelong love of books can be nurtured (Manning, 1988).

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Reading aloud to children has always been a part of classroom instruction, but it has been neglected in recent years because of time constraints in the classroom due to the requirement for accountability, competency testing, and other demands on time. The media, however, point out that reading aloud to children as young as one year of age will increase vocabulary, improve listening skills, and enhance ability to comprehend. It would appear that many parents and teachers hear the message but do not take this advice seriously.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to establish whether the media has influenced the decisions of parents and teachers to read aloud to elementary grade children.

HYPOTHESIS

The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

1. Media (television commercials, magazines, articles and posters) have no appreciable effect on how often parents read aloud to children or at what age they begin reading.
2. Media (television commercials, magazines, articles, and posters) have no appreciable effect on how often teachers read aloud to children or at what age they begin reading.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is designed to relate specifically to classroom reading instruction that would create not only better readers but readers who want to read. For the most part, studies relating to parent behavior have not been included unless related to the classroom or unless associated with teacher behavior. This study does not cover all related literature, but the conclusions drawn are believed to be consistent with studies on this subject.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The introduction to the study, which includes a statement of the problem, purpose, hypothesis, limitations, and organization, is presented in Chapter I. The pertinent literature on reading aloud to children is reviewed in Chapter II. The methodology is presented in Chapter III. Data are analyzed and findings are discussed and presented in Chapter IV. The last chapter consists of the summary and conclusion followed by recommendations of the researcher.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Most of the research that has been conducted on the topic of reading aloud to children is correlational in design. The main concern has generally been with measuring the context in which reading to children is associated with their development in language and literacy (Teale, 1981). Teale states that "it must also be recognized that there is limited knowledge based solely on the significance of reading to children" (904).

Correlational results indicate only that there is a link between being read to and success in certain general competencies in language and literacy. They give little insight into specific consequences of reading to children, and they do not address the important theoretical and practical issues of how it is that these competencies develop as a result of the book reading events. Still to be investigated fully are what reading aloud does for children and how and why it does what it does (Teale, 1981).

Reading Aloud

"Reading aloud is the most influential advertisement for the pleasures of reading" according to Trelease (201). An example of how this concept works is reflected in the research done by Trelease. During an eight week period, he observed a kindergarten class that had a good classroom library and whose teacher read aloud every day from three kinds of library books: very familiar

(read repeatedly by the teacher), familiar (read once), and unfamiliar (unread). In observing which books were chosen during free time, the researcher found that children chose the very familiar books three times as often and familiar books twice as often as the unfamiliar books. The children who were non-readers modeled the teacher when choosing the very familiar and familiar books and pretended they were reading them aloud. The kindergarten teacher had modeled the way for reading, and in so doing she inspired her students to try this magic called reading (Trelease 1989).

Trelease said, "Reading is an accrued skill: The more you do it the better you get at it: and the more you do it the more you like it" (202). This belief is reaffirmed by Samuel's theory of automaticity in reading: If children do not read much, they cannot get much better at it. Research indicates that today's potential young readers read little in school and out of school. Reading aloud, however, works helps convert negative reading attitudes to positive ones (Trelease, 1989).

Reading aloud to students can be considered a stake in the future of America. The student who never sees or hears an adult reading aloud for pleasure is unlikely to grow up and read to children. Reading aloud to students, however, improves the chances the listener will someday read to his or her child, and this strengthens the possibilities of future education's being a true partnership between the parent-teacher and the classroom teacher (Trelease, 1989).

Trelease (200) says,

Teaching children how to read is not enough, we must also teach them to want to read. We have produced a nation of schooltime readers where the objective should be lifetime readers. But if the school reading experience is so life-leeching that the student never reads outside of class and, worse, solemnly swears on graduation day never to read another book, the system has failed.

Home and School Impact on Reading Aloud to Children

Researchers argue that by being read to, a child learns that print is meaningful, that print can be turned into sound, and that written language is different from oral language. They also have observed that in reading events, the child learns certain features of written language (as evidenced by his/her ability to mimic the lexicon and structure typical of written language). The work of researchers helps in characterizing the consequences of reading to children; however, neither author has examined in detail the interaction between parent and child that help develop these understandings (Teale, 1981).

The Classroom Teacher (as cited in Teale, 1981) investigated the relationship between "parental style" in reading and the child's performance on certain pre-reading related task. Teale identified fourteen "components of the parent-child reading episode" and found 1) total number of words spoken by child, 2) number of questions answered by child, 3) number of task-related

questions asked by child, 4) warm-up questions asked by parent, and 5) post-story evaluative questions asked by parent to be of importance. Teale concluded that the reading style of the most benefit to a child is one in which there is verbal interaction between parents and child (Teale, 1981).

Reading aloud to children is not all that was done in the way of reading in these different studies. Many researchers also found that one or both of the parents of the early readers were readers themselves. Various studies reveal that certain factors are present when young children are successful readers, and these are that the children come from a print-rich environment which is interpreted for them by various family members. Early readers see people reading and responding to print, and they themselves are read to and come to understand that reading is another means of communicating. The environment allows them to discover that reading is a pleasurable, unique, communicative experience (Teale, 1981).

Another factor to consider for successful early readers is that there is contact with paper and pencil. Many studies of early readers fail to mention this facet of beginning reading, probably because the design of the research does not include the writing aspect of reading. Some evidence supports that learning to read is reinforced by simultaneous experience in writing. It might be said that a positive environment for learning to read includes lots of scribbling (Teale, 1981).

Past research and present findings suggest that school

achievement and high literature interests tend to go together, but early readers and skilled readers are not necessarily recreational readers. A child may have high academic ability as measured by a standardized achievement test, and yet if literature is not stressed at home or school this child may not show an interest in books or develop into a recreational reader (Morrow, 1983).

Classrooms where literature programs were rated as good or excellent and where teachers stressed regular planned literature activities resulted in eighty-one percent of the high-interest children. These classrooms had teachers who provided space for well-designed library corners. Eighty-two percent of the low-interest children in this study were rated as fair or poor (Morrow, 1983).

Morrow states that research should investigate the home and school environment and behavior of children having high and low interest in literature. Reading programs are so skills-oriented that they provide little opportunity for students to do recreational reading (228).

The study was successful in developing a composite measure to identify kindergarten children who have high or low interest in literature. It has already been documented that reading habits develop early. The observational techniques described in this study can be useful for studying early development (Morrow, 1983).

Morrow writes,

The classroom teacher can identify children
demonstrating low interest in books and then provide

literature-related activities to stimulate these children's interest. The parents of these children should be encouraged to incorporate literature activities into the home to help develop their child's interest in books" (p. 227).

This study indicates that the home has the strongest influence on a child's interest in literature when he or she is very young. The findings of the study also reveal that there are similarities between the home behaviors and environments of older voluntary readers, early readers, and young children who exhibit an interest in literature. All of the groups come from home literary environments and use the public library. The early readers and children interested in literature demonstrate similar play activities such as paper and crayon activities. Early readers were also read to frequently (Morrow, 1983).

The Morrow study found that rules regarding television viewing are more prevalent in the high-interest group. All parents reported reading some type of reading materials, but reading novels and magazines was particular to the high-interest parents. Working and non-working mothers had no effect in interest in books. The mothers of low-interest children watched more television than those in high-interest groups. The placement of books in many rooms of the home, especially in the child's bedroom and in the kitchen, was characteristic of high-interest children (p.231).

Parents and Reading Aloud to Children

Parents become a visual model for their children to imitate.

Research has shown the value of reading aloud to children. The parent demonstrates with visual impact that he/she is interested in reading and in the books that have value for the child (Smith, 1988).

In persuading parents of the importance of reading aloud to children, one must answer several questions. The first is, "How is this going to help my child's reading if I'm doing the reading?" The second is, "Why should you read to a child who already knows how to read?" Another question to consider is, "When do you stop reading aloud to children?" (Smith, 1988).

Smith has a simple explanation: listening comprehension comes before reading comprehension. If a child is not exposed to the word auditorally he/she will never say the word. And, he points out, if one has never heard it or said it, it stands to reason he will not likely be able to read it or write it (1989).

Many parents of children who are successful readers discuss their own reading and the books their children read in school and at home. They show a personal interest in the intellectual life of their children, especially as it relates to books. Furthermore, parents want to know what their children are learning or enjoying much as they want their children to know that they likewise get pleasure and information from what they read (Smith, 1988).

Even parents who are aware that reading aloud is a vital part of a child's education, reading aloud to infants and young children can be a frustrating experience. Tiny babies do not appear interested in stories, six months later they are "eating" books, and babies twelve to eighteen months old would rather get down off the parent's lap and crawl around on the floor (Smith, 1988).

Some parents know how to encourage their children to read, and some have learned how to stay actively involved with their children's reading growth in order to promote intellectual development. Most parents, however, need some guidance and the encouragement of the school in order to know what to do. Moreover, schools can offer parents and students a way to become cooperative learners, that is, to work together consistently in order to learn by mutual need (Smith, 1988).

After conducting a study on thirteen mothers who read to their infants, Lamme (1986) found that book-reading was not only a positive experience but educational as well. Thirteen mothers were videotaped reading to their infants, and Lamme noted that the mothers adjusted their reading behavior to the development levels of their infants.

The youngest babies in the study (from birth to about 3 months) simply stared at the book. There appeared to be no connection between the infant's gaze and what the parent was reading or talking about. At about five months, the infants began following the parent's pointing cues. If the infant looked at a

picture, the parent would then point and talk about what the child focused on, but most of the time the parent would initiate the verbal exchange by pointing to a particular picture, and then the infant would look to where the parent directed.

When the babies were a little older (nine months to a year) the babies would look at the designated picture (which matched the adult's reading) without the parental pointing cue. At this stage the babies all looked for longer periods of time at the colorful illustrations and books that they were familiar with.

Lamme observed that when younger infants looked away from the book (without the distractions of a noise or something else), the avoidance behavior usually indicated the end of that book sharing experience. If the parent stopped reading at that point the session ended happily, but if the parent tried to finish reading the book, the baby would react adversely by crying and the book-sharing experience would end on a sad and frustrating note. Cueing into the baby's visual behavior then becomes good way for parents to determine when the baby is involved in the book reading or has had enough (Lamme, 1986).

Part of the tactile behavior observed in this study was that if parents pointed as they read, by one year of age the babies would also point and the parents would respond by naming whatever the child pointed at. Many infants could also turn one page at a time of a familiar story, especially if the book had thick cardboard pages.

Factors which seem to influence the way an infant responds to

a book-reading episode include the familiarity of the book, the time of day, the setting or location of the reading, the infant's level of energy or fatigue, the type of book being read, the size of the book, and the person reading, be it father, mother, sibling or friend according to Lamme.

Lamme states that when babies are very young, it is important to observe their visual responses to book-reading and to end sessions quickly when the baby starts to lose interest. When children begin to pat and grab the books, they should have the heavier cardboard books so that the books will hold up. Older infants like to be actively involved in the storybook reading. They do not enjoy being read to as much as they enjoy being actively involved in the reading experience.

When parents are aware of the typical behavior patterns that are part of the normal development of infants, they can proceed on course with reading aloud to their infants, knowing when to put down the book before it turns into an ordeal for the child. Parents must be made aware that they should be paying more attention to their child than to the text of the book. Lamme found that it was obvious that the infants who are read to routinely greatly enjoy that experience and learn a great deal about books, reading and language from their book-reading experiences (1986).

The Classroom Reading Teacher (1988) reported on parental styles in reading aloud to young children, concluding that if a parent talks with a child while reading aloud, the child will

enjoy and understand the story more. The quality of parents' reading aloud to their children is important. It was stressed that interaction between a parent and a child must be positive if oral reading episodes to result in positive attitudes toward books and reading (p. 865-866).

Studies on the quality of reading aloud time to young children show that relatively little time is spent by parents in this endeavor. Manning (1988) states that working mothers and homemakers spend an average of one minute a day, including weekends, reading to their children and that a father in a home where the mother works spend no more than a minute a day reading to children and no time if the mother does not work outside the home (p.60).

Manning (1988) conducted a study on the perspectives of parents who read aloud to their children. Parents were selected through the children's sections of forty-three public libraries in a large urban city in the Southeast. The parents answered a questionnaire that focused on such details as what happens during oral reading, amount of print in the home, parents' reading habits, their perceptions of the value of reading aloud to children, and their experiences with reading aloud when they were children (57).

Manning's findings indicate that parents who have developed the habit of reading aloud to their children are aware of its many values. The study also confirms that many parents read to their children as a result of outside information about the value of

that process to their children's learning. Manning states that such a result indicates that there is a need in schools to incorporate parent education programs (p.61).

Criscuolo (1986) describes activities and communication techniques that can win parental support for quality reading instruction. It would be helpful for parents to be given lists of books annually, differentiating between those to read to the child and those to be read by the child. Reading teachers could also make contact with community pediatricians, providing them with reasons they should recommend that parents read to their child (Trelease, 1989).

Teachers and Reading Aloud to Children

Teachers can play an important role in stimulating voluntary reading in children. According to the results of a study conducted by Morrow (1983), teachers need support from the students' home environments to succeed in this role. It seems important to establish early cooperative efforts between home and school to create a systematic, integrated program for developing recreational readers (Morrow, 1983).

When teachers do try to create a good, literary environment in their classrooms, they are given suggestions to make the reading performance successful. Criscuolo created an instrument to measure how well a teacher reads aloud to a group of children.

In his study (Criscuolo, 1986) videotaped sixty-three teachers of pre-school, kindergarten, and first and second graders as they read aloud picture story books to the children in their classes.

Each read-aloud session was analyzed by two coders using a preliminary form of a Reading Aloud to Children Scale (RACS).

Criscuolo concluded that child involvement in the story reading was the most influential item on the scale. The teachers who read the story aloud while the children had to sit quietly with no verbal involvement scored lower on the RACS as a whole than did teachers who actively involved children in the story reading. Teachers had children chorally "read" the refrains or make predictions or fill in words from time to time.

The second most important read-aloud behavior was the amount of eye contact between the reader and the children. Teachers who have to read the text word for word did not score as well as those teachers who look up from the text and make eye contact with the children.

Criscuolo's study suggests that good characteristic of oral reading is using good expression rather than reading in a monotonous tone. Another factor that contributed favorably to the overall RACS score was the teacher's pointing to words and pictures as she was reading. Selection of the book, particularly with regard to quality of the illustrations, proved to be important. Teachers who selected books that had large enough pictures for the group of children to see and hold their interest or elicit comments scored highest on the RACS (Criscuolo, 1986).

An important item for teachers to take into consideration when reading aloud to a class or group of children is highlighting the words and language of the story. If stories have rhyming

words, they should be made obvious to the children. Teachers should discuss or clarify an unusual vocabulary word. Repetition should be emphasized. Awareness of language factors separates the good read-aloud teacher from the poor one.

Although research provides no definite answers to the relationships between a teacher's oral reading performance and children's learning of pre-reading skills and beginning reading skills, it seems obvious that children's attitudes toward literature are influenced by the ways in which adults react and respond to reading material (Criscuolo, 1986).

Research suggests still other important reasons for teachers to be reading aloud to their students as an integral part of the daily curriculum. For economically disadvantaged children in grades one and two and in grades four through six, investigation of the effects of reading aloud on a regular basis has shown significant increases in vocabulary growth, knowledge of word meanings, visual decoding, motor encoding, and reading comprehension achievement (Resnick, 1987).

Reading aloud to children in elementary school from low income homes and to children who are low achievers seems to aid vocabulary development and reading achievement. The regularity of hearing stories read and the duration of the treatment seem to be factors related to reading growth. Hearing stories read can affect first grade reading achievement and can also affect later reading interests. Language development and hearing stories read aloud have been shown to be related, as have the syntactic

complexity of the stories listened to or read and the stage of linguistic development. Listening to books read aloud may aid in readiness for coping with literary language even better than oral discussion (Resnick, 1987).

Teachers read to children for a variety of reasons. Many teachers who read aloud have a deep love for books and want their students to feel the same way. Some teachers read aloud because they want to read for themselves. Unfortunately, some educators have not realized the value of reading aloud and have failed to provide students a time slot in which they can hear good literature. Reading aloud has sometimes been relegated to be used to "fill in" (Resnick, 1987).

McCormick (1977) states,

In this age of accountability, time spent reading to children can be justified since the activity does promote measurable growth in achievement. At the same time, when children hear literature read, we are satisfying the goals of educators who value the equally important aesthetic and subjective reasons for reading aloud to children. (p. 143)

Media's impact on Reading Aloud to Children

Trelease (1989) discovered that accessibility of printed materials on a wide range of subjects is a characteristic of the environment of successful early readers. This availability enabled the children to use and be used to written messages. He commented on the "easy availability of materials" for children in his California study, and the results from the New York study indicate that pre-school readers had access to a range of reading materials, especially storybooks, Golden books and alphabet books.

Availability is not determined simply by the number of books owned by a family but also by the use of the local library as a source of reading material for children (204).

Printed material to be read aloud does not have to be books.

Trelease (1998) cites the importance of "everyday print" in the children's learning to read. Many children love to identify signs, names on products, words on their clothing, labels on cans, and words in television commercials. Cookbooks, telephone directories, maps, and newspapers are also frequently mentioned as sources of read-aloud materials (p.204).

Children come to reading through a variety of printed materials as different as books and street signs. Each child has varied interests when he or she is introduced to reading. An environment that facilitates the child's reading various types of printed materials on a range of topics does much to take into account the point just mentioned and thereby makes learning to

read a part of the general endeavor of comprehending one's own surroundings (Trelease, 1989).

Books, signs, and product labels -- all are potential sources for reading and may contribute to a positive environment for learning to read. The opportunity to learn to read could remain untapped, however, unless the child learns the purpose print serves. The child must learn that print is meaningful. Understanding the functions of written language is easier when printed materials are accompanied by interpretation. Reading and responding to print are the basic ways by which children come to understand that print has meaning for them. When a child points to a stop sign and experiences the car's slowing down and coming to a stop, he begins to understand that words can be meaningful to him (Teale, 1981).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the subjects, the questionnaire design, procedures and data analysis.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were the parents and teachers of students grades one through five in the Coyle Elementary School, Coyle, Oklahoma. Questionnaire responses were received from 109 parents (69%) and six teachers.

Questionnaire Design

With the help of the principal, four (4) parents and two (2) teachers who were not involved with the study were selected to validate the survey. The survey questions focused on details such as if the parents ever read aloud to their children, how often, if anything had influenced them to read aloud to their children, and if they had ever seen commercials or read articles on the importance of reading aloud to their children (see appendix A).

The teacher survey questions focused on such questions as the grade level they teach, if they read aloud to their students, how often, which factors influenced them to read aloud, and if the media had any effect on their decision to read aloud to their classes (see appendix B).

Procedures

The parents of the students and their teachers in grades one through five were given surveys. The surveys were color-coded by grades to facilitate the interpretation of the data. Attached to the survey was an informed consent form for each parent and teacher to sign. The highest level of confidentiality was observed. Along with the survey, a cover letter with the principal's signature was attached, explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting cooperation of parents and teachers. The surveys were coded to input the data into the latest edition of the SAS statistical packet.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Chi Square analysis from the SAS Statistical package.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This study examines the practice of reading aloud to children in grades one through five in the Coyle Public School, which is located in a small town in north central Oklahoma. The literature reports that it still is not known if television commercials, magazine articles, and posters that promote reading aloud to children have had any appreciable effect upon the extensiveness of oral reading done by parents and by teachers in the classroom. This chapter presents the findings of a survey of parents and teachers of children, grades one through five, in Coyle Elementary School, Coyle, Oklahoma.

MEDIA EFFECTS ON PARENTS

The study resulted in 109 (69%) parent questionnaires being returned. Out of these, all parents indicated that they read aloud to their children.

Question #7 on the questionnaire asked, "Have you seen commercials or read articles on the importance of reading aloud to children?" The following results include all parents who completed the questionnaire: 106 responded YES, that they had seen some type of commercial or article, and 2 responded NO, that they had not seen any commercials or articles about reading aloud to children.

The parents were then asked how often they read to their

children. The results were

- A. Always--28
- B. Frequently--37
- C. Sometimes--34
- D. Occasionally--10
- E. Never--0

Parents were asked, " How old was your child when you began to read to him/her?" The results were

- A. Birth-2 years--83
- B. 2-7 years--26
- C. 7-11 years--0
- D. 11-15 years--0

Question #8 asked what type of advertising parents had seen about reading aloud. (There could be more than one response to this question.) The results were

- A. Television--75
- B. Magazines--71
- C. Newspaper--41
- D. Literature sent home from school--61

Question #9, which could have multiple responses, asked, "Did the advertising you saw

- A. cause you to begin reading to your children? 25 parents responded YES.
- B. confirm your views about reading to children? 69 parents responded YES.
- C. make you feel guilty that you had not read to your

children? 11 responded YES

- D. have no effect on the amount of time spent reading to your children? 14 responded YES.
- E. encourage you to share your reading with your children? 52 responded YES.
- F. encourage you to get a library card? 11 responded YES.
- G. encourage you to attend a library reading class? 2 responded YES.

All of the parents were asked if they enjoy reading. The results indicated that 105 do enjoy reading, and four do not.

Question #11 asked if the children had ever seen adults in their house reading:

- A. Always--64
- B. Frequently--30
- C. Sometimes--14
- D. Occasionally-1
- E. Never--0

All of the parents thought that reading was important, which makes question 12 of the survey complete.

The last question on the questionnaire asked parents at what age they would stop reading aloud to their children. The results of this question were:

- A. Birth-2 years--0
- B. 2-7 years--1
- C. 7-11 years--35

D. 11-15 years--60

E. Never--11

The findings of this part of the survey indicate that almost all of the parents surveyed had in fact seen commercials or had read articles about the importance of reading aloud to children. Sixty-one parents indicated that they had received literature sent home from school on this topic. Approximately a year ago the school did hold parent in-service training and one of the topics for this in-service training was the benefit of reading aloud to children. Perhaps this had a strong impact on the parents.

As a result of exposure to the media, 25 parents stated that they began to read to their children, and 52 parents were encouraged to share reading with their children. Many of the parents in this school (60) felt that once their child is between 11-15 years of age, they can stop reading aloud to the child. This would suggest that the media should place more emphasis on reading aloud to older children.

The form of media that had the most impact on parents was television, with magazines second, and the newspaper the least effective.

MEDIA EFFECTS OF TEACHERS

The second part of this research had to do with teachers and the effect that the media have had on their attitudes on reading aloud to their students. Six (75%) teacher surveys were returned.

All six of the teachers responded that they do read aloud to their classes. Four teachers indicated that they read aloud every

day, and two read aloud frequently (three to four times a week).

The teachers were asked if the media had any effect on their decision to read aloud to their students. Three teachers responded that the media had no effect on their decision to read aloud, while three said it had.

When asked at what grade level teachers should stop reading aloud to students, four responded never, and two teachers said 12th grade was the level at which reading aloud should stop. Another question which elicited a variety of responses was what factors influenced them to read aloud to their students. Some said that they read aloud to increase vocabulary, improve listening skills, because the students enjoy it, that it helps the class to relax, that college courses encouraged it, and one teacher stated that his/her own parents and teachers had read to him/her and it had had a lasting, positive effect.

Four teachers stated that they had stressed the importance of parents reading aloud to their children at home, but two stated that they had never done so. The consensus among the teachers was that the schools should have workshops for parents so that they are made aware of the lasting benefits of reading aloud to their children. A few teachers indicated that book lists should be sent home to parents.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Chapter One presented the background necessary to understand the study i.e., the statement, purpose, organization, and limitations of the study, as well as an hypothesis and glossary. Chapter Two presented the pertinent literature concerned with reading aloud to children. Chapter Three provided a description of the research methodology and the questionnaires used in the study. Chapter Four was a presentation of the results obtained from a parent and teacher questionnaire on some of the effects the media had on parents and teachers of Coyle Elementary School, grades one through five, in their decision to read aloud to children.

Conclusion

The media played an important role in the promulgation of reading aloud by parents to their children according to this study. Do parents of students in the Coyle Elementary School, grades one through five, spend a significant amount of time reading aloud to the children? This study shows that parents are aware of its importance and seem to realize that they should be investing significant time each day in this act. Manning (1988)

conducted a study that investigated the perspectives of parents who do read aloud to their children:

Parents were selected through the children's sections of forty three public libraries in a large urban city in the Southeast. The parents had to answer a survey questionnaire that focused on such details as what happened during the oral reading, the amount of print in the home, parents' reading habits, and their personal experiences with reading aloud when they were children. (59)

This study findings clearly indicate that parents who have developed the habit of reading aloud to their children are aware of its value. The study also confirms that many parents are reading to their children as a result of outside information about the value of that process to their children's learning. Manning feels that such a result should indicate that there is a need in schools to incorporate parent education programs (59).

This study shows that television has been a major factor, along with magazines, in influencing the parents surveyed to read aloud to their children.

The Coyle elementary school teachers, on the other hand, have not been influenced or persuaded by the media to read aloud to their classes. If teachers enter a classroom and do not believe that reading aloud for fifteen minutes per day to their students is important, the media have been ineffective in changing their attitudes and behavior according to the standards used in this

study. Therefore, undergraduate school must be convincing and persuasive in getting the message across to future classroom teachers that reading aloud daily for fifteen minutes can have a lasting effect on their students.

Principals should also stress to their teachers the importance of making reading aloud an integral part of the daily curriculum. Trelease notes,

Teaching children how to read is not enough, we must also teach them to want to read. We have produced a nation of schooltime readers where the objective should be lifetime readers. But if the school reading experience is so life-leeching that the student never reads outside of class and, worse, solemnly swears on graduation day never to read another book, the system has failed (203).

Perhaps educators should be addressing this problem in workshops for teachers.

This study shows that the media have been effective for parents in the Coyle Community in impacting their decision to read aloud to their children but have not impacted the classroom teachers in the Coyle Elementary School, grades one through five. Nevertheless, two of six teachers interviewed do read aloud to their students frequently and four of six read aloud to their students daily, indicating their awareness of the importance of oral reading in the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers should read aloud daily as a planned part of the curriculum.
2. Teachers should evaluate their basal reading programs and be willing to supplement them with tradebooks.
3. Parents should read aloud daily to their children.
4. Parents and teachers should model reading in a positive manner.
5. The classroom and the home should be places where sharing can take place through the common factor of a shared-book experience.
6. Reading aloud should be practiced in all grades.

APPENDIX A
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT SURVEY/QUESTIONNAIRE

*Please check the one that applies male female

*How would you describe yourself? (Please check one)

 Black (non-Hispanic)

 Hispanic

 American Indian or Alaskan Native
Caucasian
Hispanic)

 White, Anglo,
(non-

 Asian or Pacific Islander (including Indian subcontinent)

 Other (please specify) _____

*How much schooling have you completed?

Check ONE for the highest level COMPLETED or degree RECEIVED.
(If currently enrolled, mark the level of previous grade
attended or highest degree received.)

 No school completed

 Nursery school

 Kindergarten

 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade

 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade

 9th grade

 10th grade

 11th grade

 12th grade, No Diploma

 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE-high school DIPLOMA or the equivalent (For
Example: GED)

 Some college but no degree

 Associate's degree in college

 Bachelor's degree (For Example: BA, AB, BS)

 Master's degree (For Example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd)

 Professional school degree (For Example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB JD)

 Doctorate degree (For Example: PhD, EdD)

1. How many children do you have in grades one through five.
(Please circle one)

A. One

B. Two

C. Three

D. Four or more

2. Have you ever read aloud to your child/children?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. If answer #2 was yes, please circle how often.

A. Always (daily)

B. Frequently (three to four times a week)

C. Sometimes (one to two times a week)

D. Occasionally (once a month)

E. Never

4. If answer #2 was yes, state why you read to your child/children.

5. How old was your child when you began to read to him/her?

A. Birth-2 years

B. 2-7 years

C. 7-11 years

D. 11-15 years

6. Has anyone or anything influenced you to read aloud to your child/children?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Have you seen commercials or read articles on the importance of reading aloud to children?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. If #7 was yes, please circle what type of advertising.

A. Television

B. Magazine articles

C. Newspaper articles

D. Literature sent home from the school

9. Did the advertising you saw (circle all that apply)

- A. cause you to begin reading to your child/children?
- B. make you feel guilty that you had not read to your child/children?
- C. confirm your views about reading to children?
- D. have no effect on the amount of time spent reading to your child/children?
- E. encourage you to share you reading with your child/children?
- F. encourage you to get a library card?
- G. encourage you to attend a library reading class?

10. Do you enjoy reading?

___Yes ___No

11. Do your children ever see adults in the house reading?

- A. Always (daily)
- B. Frequently (three to four times a week)
- C. Sometimes (one to two times a week)
- D. Occasionally (once a month)
- E. Never

12. Do you think reading aloud to children is important?

___Yes ___No

13. At what age did you (or will you) stop reading aloud to your children?

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| A. Birth-2 years | B. 2-7 years |
| C. 7-11 years | D. 11-15 years |

APPENDIX B
TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

TEACHER SURVEY/QUESTIONNAIRE

*Please check the one that applies ☐ male ☐ female

*How would you describe yourself? (Please check one)

☐ Black (non-Hispanic)

☐ Hispanic

☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
Caucasian

☐ White, Anglo,
(non-Hispanic)

☐ Asian or Pacific Islander (including Indian subcontinent)

☐ Other (please specify) _____

1. What grade level/content area do you teach?
(Please circle all that applies)

A. First

B. Second

C. Third

D. Fourth

E. Fifth

2. Do you read aloud to your class?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. If #2 was yes, how often?

A. Always (daily)

B. Frequently (three to four times a week)

C. Sometimes (one to two times a week)

D. Occasionally (once a month)

E. Never

4. Do you think reading aloud to students increases their
vocabularies and improves reading comprehension?

☐ Yes☐ No

5. At what grade level should teachers stop reading aloud to their students?

6. If you read to your students, what types of literature do you use? (Please circle whatever is applicable)

A. Novels

B. Short Stories

C. Poetry

D. Picture story books

E. Other

7. Do you enjoy reading?

☐ Yes☐ No

8. What factors have influenced you to read aloud to your students?

9. Has the media (electronic or print) had any effect on your decision to read aloud to your class? If so, in what way?

10. What could the school do to encourage more parents to read aloud to their children?

11. Do you stress the importance of parents reading aloud to their child/children?

☐ Yes☐ No

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

P.O. Box 405
Langston, Oklahoma 73050
October 26, 1995

Mr. Kenneth Victory, Principal
Coyle Elementary School
Coyle, Oklahoma 73027

Dear Mr. Victory:

I am a senior Elementary Education major at Langston University and a participant in the *Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program*. I am writing a thesis as a partial requirement for the Honors Program. In order to complete the research, I am requesting your assistance in obtaining the pertinent data.

My thesis will explore the value of parents and teachers regarding reading aloud to elementary school children, and if the media influenced the parents and teachers to read aloud to their children. I would like to do my case study on Coyle Elementary school partly because of its proximity to Langston University. Copies of my thesis would be placed in the Melvin B. Tolson Black Heritage center and in the Coyle School Library.

I would like permission to send a questionnaire to the parents and teachers of Coyle Elementary School this semester. The highest level of confidentiality will be observed.

If possible, I would like to meet with you and anyone else who is interested in my request to determine whether or not the study proposed can be undertaken.

Sincerely yours,


Darwin Prater Spiller

APPENDIX D
LETTER TO PARENT(S)

P.O. Box 405
Langston, Oklahoma 73050
October 26, 1995

Dear Coyle Elementary School Parent(s):

I am a senior Elementary Education major at Langston University and a participant in the Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program. I am writing a thesis as a partial requirement for the honors program. In order to gather the data I need to complete this study, I have designed the attached survey/questionnaire. I realize that this is a busy time of year; however, I would appreciate your taking the time to complete the survey/questionnaire as accurately as possible, without discussing it with other teachers.

The information will be used for statistical purposes ONLY and will be ANONYMOUSLY reported as group data (without names). Your input will be a valuable contribution to my study.

Please take a few minutes to complete the attached survey/questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by _____ Date _____.

The honors program thesis will be catalogued and housed in the Melvin B. Tolson Black Heritage Center and in the Coyle School library.

Your response will be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


Darwin Prater Spiller

enclosure

Gail Anderson, Assistant Professor
School of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Thesis Committee Chair

APPENDIX E
LETTER TO TEACHER

P.O. Box 405
Langston, Oklahoma 73050
October 26, 1995

Dear Coyle Elementary School Teacher:

I am a senior Elementary Education major at Langston University and a participant in the Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program. I am writing a thesis as a partial requirement for the honors program. In order to gather the data I need to complete this study, I have designed the attached survey/questionnaire. I realize that this is a busy time of year; however, I would appreciate your taking the time to complete the survey/questionnaire as accurately as possible, without discussing it with other teachers.

The information will be used for statistical purposes ONLY and will be ANONYMOUSLY reported as group data (without names). Your input will be a valuable contribution to my study.

Please take a few minutes to complete the attached survey/questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by Date .

The honors program thesis will be catalogued and housed in the melvin B. Tolson Black Heritage Center and in the Coyle School library.

Your response will be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



Darwin Prater Spiller

enclosure

Gail Anderson, Assistant Professor
School of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Thesis Committee Chair

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Classroom Reading Teacher (1988): Pratical Teaching Ideas, ClipSheet, and Questions and Answers. The Reading Teacher, 41, 857-871.
- Criscuolo, N. (1986). Ways to Foster a Home-School Partnership in Reading. Reading Horizons, 26, 278-282.
- Lamme, L. (1986). Book-reading Behaviors of Infants. The Reading Teacher, 39, 504-508.
- Manning, M. (1988). Reading Aloud to Children: Perspectives of Parents. Reading Research and Instruction, 27, 56-61.
- McCormick, S. (1977). Should You Read Aloud to Your Children? Language Arts, 54, 139-144.
- Morrow, L. (1983). Home and School Correlates of Interest in Literature. Journal of Educational Research, 76, 226-232.
- Resnick, M. (1987). Mothers Reading Aloud to Infants: A New Observational Tool. The Reading Teacher, 40, 888-895.
- Smith, C. (1988). The Expanding Role of Parents. The Reading Teacher, 42, 68-69.
- Teale, W. (1981). Parents Reading to Their Children; What We Know and Need to Know. Language Arts, 58, 902-910.
- Trelease, J. (1989). Jim Trelease Speaks on Reading Aloud to Children. The Reading Teacher, 43, 200-206.

VITA

Darwin Prater Spiller

Candidate for the Degree of

Bachelor of Elementary Education and Behavioral Sciences

and

Completion of

E. P. McCabe Honors Program

Thesis: SOME EFFECTS OF THE MEDIA ON PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN
REGARDS TO READING ALOUD TO CHILDREN

Major: Elementary Education

Biographical Information:

Personal Data: Born Chicago, Illinois, November 13,
1973, the son of Leroy and Jeanette Spiller.

Education: Graduated from Harlan Community Academy High
School, in June 1992; will complete requirements for
Bachelor of Science in Education at Langston University in
May 1997, having also completed all requirements in the E.
P. McCabe Honors Program.

Honors and Activities: Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program,
Scholars Club, Dean's List, Who's Who Among Students in
American Colleges and Universities, National Collegiate
Education Award, Student Teacher of the Year (1996-97), and
Mr. Langston University, 1996-97.